

November 5, 1973

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Dear Francis,

Although not especially noted for it I can be aroused to heights of anger, particularly when I believe I've been dealt with unfairly. So if my comments seem too blunt, bear in mind that they originate from the impetuosity of the moment and are not likely to reflect a lasting feeling.

What has provoked me is the implicit and not too subtle threat in the last paragraph of your letter of October 19. After all, Francis, I didn't owe you anything-information or pictures; supplying both was mine and Jack's choice-freely given with the hope and expectation that you and Roger would find it helpful in your own work. I was especially pained to discover that you (I trust that the thought never entered Roger's mind) believed (even if momentarily) that I was being devious and trying to withhold information from our exchange.

On several occasions I've had to battle my students and fellows over the issue of whether I talk too freely about ideas and experiments in progress. In my view science is not worth doing if secrecy, suspicion and back-biting are rules of the game. Consequently I refuse to accede to the practice of too many others-silence until published; even though on several occasions that degree of openness has come back to haunt and embarrass me.

In this particular instance you'll recall I tried to interest you and Roger (and others) in recognizing that viral DNA molecules because of their structural and sequence homogeneity are excellent objects for studying the details of protein-DNA interactions. So, I'm delighted that you've seen the light and if our experience can be helpful to you, that only increases my enthusiasm. I can even admire your own willingness to do battle but I believe that threats are out of line.

Sincerely yours,

PB:af